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SOME TRANSLATIONS OF HEBREW POEMS.

OF the following translations by Miss Nina Davis, Miss Elsie Davis, and the Rev. Dr. Edward King, the specimens from Kalir and Ibn Gebirol have never been turned into English verse before. The selections from Jehuda Halevi have been several times so rendered, notably by Mrs. Lucas in *Songs of Zion*, but the alternatives that follow are so meritorious that they cannot fail to prove interesting. Kalir has received far too little attention in England. Though his lines are harsh and difficult, he undoubtedly possessed more poetic force than any other of the New-Hebrew poets, Jehuda Halevi perhaps not excepted. Ibn Gebirol, though his merits have not been questioned, has also received, so far, but scanty justice from translators.

I. A.

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH BY THE CAVE OF MACPELAH.

Translated from the Original Hebrew of Kalir.

The Prophet standing by the fathers' graves,
 With soul o'erwhelmed he speaks, for solace craves ;
 " How can ye lie at rest, beloved ones,
 While sharpened swords consume your captive sons ?
 Where now, O fathers, lurks your merit rare
 In that vast wilderness of land laid bare ?
 They cry each one with lamentation sore
 For children banished, sons that are no more ;
 They pray imploring with a cry for grace,
 To Him who dwelleth in the realms of space.
 Ah ! where is now God's promise made of old ?
 ' I will not my first covenant withhold.' " ¹

¹ Lev. xxvi. 45.

Changed is My glory,
 From them departed,
 They have not feared Me
 Nor seen the right way ;
 From them I hid Me,
 And still they turned not,
 Nor to Me yearned they ;
 Shall I restrain Me,
 Hearing them utter
 " Our God He is not " ? ¹

Then father Abraham with bitter cry,
 Implored, a suppliant lowly, God on high ;
 " Ten times in vain for them great trials I bore,
 For woe ! mine eyes have seen destruction sore ;
 Ah ! where is now Thy promise made of old,
 Abram, thou shalt not fear, thy Shield behold.' " ²

Far have they wandered,
 Erred after strange gods,
 And they have hewn them
 Cisterns which hold not :
 Shall I restrain Me
 When they regard not
 My sacred mandates ?

And thus did Isaac all his sorrow tell,
 Unto the Lord who high in Heav'n doth dwell :
 " Wherefore was I appointed to be slain,
 My seed is crushed and low in chains has lain ;
 Ah ! where is now Thy promise made of old,
 ' My covenant with Isaac I will hold ' ? " ³

Unto my prophet
 Sorely rebellious,
 They have polluted
 My holy mountain :
 Lo, I am weary
 With ever hearing
 Their cry which riseth
 From the earth upwards ;
 Shall I restrain Me
 Seeing the slaughter
 Of Zechariah ? ⁴

¹ Jer. v. 12.

² Gen. xv. 1.

³ Levit. xxvi. 42.

⁴ 2 Chron. xxiv. 20.

And then spake he with learning deep endowed,¹
 His form with shame and bitter sorrow bowed ;
 " My little ones I reared with holy care,
 How are they caught within the fatal snare !
 Ah ! dearly have I paid, a thousand-fold,
 My erring children's debt of guilt untold."
 Thus spake the faithful shepherd in his woe,
 Covered with ashes and in dust laid low.
 " My tender sheep, in genial shelter reared,
 Lo ! how are they before their season sheared !
 Ah ! where is now Thy promise made of old,
 'There shall not be a widow in the fold' ?"²
 With voices of distress the air is rent ;
 With sobs doth Leah to her despair give vent,
 And Rachel weeping for her children dead ;
 Zilpah with face of anguish, heart of dread,
 And Bilhah grieving for the evil day,
 Her hands to God uplifted in dismay.

Turn, O ye perfect ones,
 Unto your rest again ;
 I will fulfil for you
 All that your hearts desire ;
 Down unto Babylon
 With you My Presence went,
 Surely will I return
 Your sons' captivity.

NINA DAVIS.

THE CONFESSION.

*From the "Royal Crown," by Ibn Gebirol.
 Translated from the Hebrew.*

My God, I know that mine iniquity
 Is heavier than my feeble words express,
 And to recount my trespasses to Thee
 Doth memory fail, for they are numberless.

¹ Jacob : *vide* Midrash Rabbah תולדות and Talmud Megillah, pp. 16 b
 and 17 a. ² Jerem. li. 5.